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Missiology

Korean Discourse on Mission: The Spiritual Vision for the Nation of Rev. Kyung-Chik Han

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Abstract

This article takes up the theme of mission discourses by looking at how contrasting Korean Protestant mission theologies – church growth discourse and minjung theology – have been taken up to support international agendas. The context from which they come is illuminated through a critical study of the "spiritual vision for the nation" of Rev. Kyung-Chik Han, founder of Youngnak Presbyterian Church and national leader. It is argued that Han's theology is a more mainstream discourse which arises from the period of colonization by Japan and the struggle for the nation, and that it has been distorted through being included under church growth. This investigation of Korean discourse on mission concludes with some observations about mission discourses more generally.

Keywords

Korean Protestantism; Kyung-Chik Han; Youngnak Church; mission discourse; mission theology; spiritual vision; church growth; minjung theology

Taking up the theme of *missio-logoi*, I have chosen to discuss Korean discourse on mission, drawing on my recent wider research on Korean Christianity (Kim and Kim, 2014).[1] Thirty years ago (in 1985) there were two different discourses of Protestant mission emanating from South Korea and being promulgated by different theologians in the West: church growth and minjung theology. In this article, I will illuminate the context from which these two contrasting discourses arose through a critical study of the ministry and mission theology of Rev. Kyung-Chik Han. Considering the way these mission theologies have been used in international circles, I shall make some observations about mission discourse more generally.

Mission discourses from Korea

Two edited volumes published in English—that is for international consumption—in the early 1980s serve to illustrate the two discourses referred to. The first is *Korean Church*

[1] See this volume for further historical background.

Growth Explosion (Ro and Nelson, 1983), which aims to take a critical look at the question "Why is the Korean church growing so rapidly?" The invited contributors represent the broad coalition of church and para-church leaders, seminary principals and theologians, and veteran foreign missionaries that had formed in this period with the aim of evangelization of the nation, and increasingly the world. Although several authors sound a cautious note, as the title suggests, the volume is overwhelmingly upbeat and is illustrated by pictures of enormous crowds at revival events. The claim of "church growth explosion" is undergirded by a theology of the power of the Holy Spirit in Korea as at the first Pentecost (Kim JG, 1983). The chapters advance cultural as well as spiritual reasons for growth, but give most credit to contemporary Korean mission methods, such as home cells, church leadership styles, mass communications and personal evangelism.

Missionaries from the West had long used inspiring Korean cases to attempt to revitalize their home churches.[2] *Korean Church Growth Explosion* was published by the Asia Theological Association—an evangelical umbrella body for theological schools that came out of the 1966 Berlin World Congress on Evangelism organized by *Christianity Today* and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. It was written explicitly to support the growing mission discourse of "church growth" (Ro and Nelson, 1983: Editors' Preface, np). The doyen of church growth theory, C. Peter Wagner endorsed the book along with other leading evangelicals of the period, including Billy Graham and Thomas Wang. That the book achieved its aim to encourage church growth in Asia is shown by the fact that a second, revised edition was brought out in 1995 by Word of Life Press, Seoul.

The second book was *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History* (CTCCCA , 1983[1981]). The contributors (bar one) were Korean academic theologians, most of whom had been removed from their posts in theological seminaries and Christian-founded universities because of their opposition to the military-backed government of the time and support of the *minjung*, or people, in labor rights and democratization movements; some of them had also suffered imprisonment and torture. *Minjung* theology is described as a nationalist and social movement aiming to free Koreans from foreign occupation and government oppression. It combines indigenous theological resources with an understanding of the socio-politically transforming power of the Holy Spirit who liberated Israel from Egypt, inspired the prophets, brought forth the messiah, and now heralds the apocalypse. As the subtitle suggests, the books aims to shift understanding of the *minjung* from powerless victims to "subjects" or agents who have the potential to define the course of Korean history.

[2] See, for example Dallet, 1874; Mott, 1910: 5-7, 88; World Missionary Conference, 1910: 36-37, 71, 80.

Minjung Theology was produced originally by the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia, the regional organization of the World Council of Churches, whose executive secretary D.T. Niles wrote the introduction. It is framed as an attempt at doing theology in Asia that challenges dominant discourses and seeks continuity with wider multi-religious society, particularly with regard to issues of social justice (Niles, 1983). The book was republished after two years by Zed books in London and Orbis Books in the USA and given a foreword by leading African American theologian James Cone. *Minjung* theology was promoted not only in English-speaking but also in German ecumenical circles alongside other theologies of identity and liberation.[3]

Looking back with the hindsight of more than thirty years, it is clear how these two Korean discourses were taken up to support what were at that time opposing missiologies of evangelism and social action promoted in evangelical and ecumenical circles respectively. However, neither book directly addresses the main cause of the polarization of mission theology: the global politics of the Cold War, or its more immediate expression in the partition of Korea. Furthermore, the two books pass each other like ships in the night. *Korean Church Growth Explosion* makes no mention of the difficult political and social context that the *minjung* theologians were addressing and *Minjung Theology* mentions nothing about the church growth in the recent period.[4]

At the time these books were published, Kyung-Chik Han had been retired for a decade from his position as the founding pastor of the widely respected Youngnak Presbyterian Church in central Seoul. A former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Tonghap), an educator, and leader of national development and nation-building, he functioned as the elder statesman of the Korean Protestant churches and represented them to government in times of crisis. In 1992 he was to be awarded the prestigious Templeton Prize for Religion for both his status as "one of Korea's most respected religious leaders" and also his "fervent work for refugees and the poor".[5]

Han's life, from his birth in 1903[6] until his death in 2000, spanned almost the whole of the turbulent twentieth century in Korea. It encompassed the Japanese occupation (1910-1945), the partition of the peninsula and the Korean War (1950-1953), the slow post-War

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[3] Particularly by Volker Küster (1995).
[4] The following factors contributed to this lacuna. First, the context of the Cold War was assumed and therefore implicit. Second, for all South Koreans, especially the *minjung* theologians who were under surveillance by the South Korean authorities, any positive mention of North Korea was illegal. Third, for international appeal, only the more transferable aspects of South Korean experience were being communicated.
[5] Sir John Templeton, "Templeton Prize Winners: Kyung-Chik Han", Templeton Press (2007), http://www.templetonpress.org/SirJohn/templetonprize.asp [accessed April 17, 2007].
[6] 1902 according to the lunar calendar.

reconstruction of South Korea (1950s-60s), industrialization under military-backed governments (1970s-1980s), democratization and the achievement of national wealth and status on the world stage (1990s). Han was not a missiologist and did not produce any academic works but he did leave a substantial collection of sermons, dating from the 1940s onwards, from which various scholars have sought to reconstruct his theology.[7] His life story is well known. It is detailed in his autobiography and in many short biographies[8] and it has been analyzed in numerous ways.[9]

Using these resources, I shall first indicate how Han's "spiritual vision for the nation" arises from Korea under Japanese colonization. Then in the main part of the article, I shall show how this vision informed his actions post-1945. Having enabled a fuller understanding of the Korean context beyond what was taken up in international discourses, I shall question the categorization of Han in church growth discourse and the grounds on which he was criticized by minjung theology before making my conclusions about mission discourses.

Kyung-Chik Han's spiritual vision for the nation

Han's mission theology was not formed in the Cold War context during which the Korean church growth and *minjung* theologies came to Western attention but in the context of Korea under Japanese domination. His spiritual formation was in the heartlands of the Pyongyang revival of 1907, which indigenized Christianity in Korea in the form of bible-centered, self-supporting churches with a distinctive spirituality. As the nation was threatened by imperial powers and then lost its sovereignty altogether in 1910, Christians developed an extended analogy of Korea with Israel in its tribulations, which Han continued in his own preaching to the end of his life. The suffering under occupation was like captivity in Egypt; the hoped-for liberation was the exodus; the evangelization of the country was "conquering Canaan"; and national reconstruction was as in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah (Kim JM, 2010; Yi HJ, 2010:181-83). The people also identified with the suffering of Christ, who was not only as a personal but also a national savior. Han frequently preached on Jesus' example of humility and love, which he sought to emulate (e.g. Han SH, 2010b:111-14). They looked for deliverance of the nation by repentance and faith and through the power of the Holy Spirit. The revival of 1907 was interpreted as the "Korean Pentecost", a sign of the restoration of the nation and the fulfilment of the promise

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[7] Selected sermons are translated and published in English in the *Kyung-Chik Han Collection* (Kim ES, 2010), vols 4-7, and in Korean by the same organization in 18 volumes. For Han's topical preaching style, see Ahn KS, 2012:77-78; Park CK, 2010: 538-41.

[8] For Han's autobiography, "My Gratitude", in translation, see Han, KC, 2010[1981]. Kim ES, 2010, volumes 1-3 are all biographical. Most of the facts of Han's biography are undisputed and easy to find in the printed and online resources developed by Youngnak Church, so I shall reference only those matters that are contentious.

[9] Kim ES, 2010, volumes 9 and 10 contain a number of translated studies of Kyung-Chik Han's life and ministry. Additional articles can be found in Kim and Ha, 2012.

that the people would become a blessing to the world. Han's own pneumatology was both a reflection of his Reformed tradition (Choi YB, 2010) and at the same time connected the Spirit particularly with national revival (Han SH, 2010b; Yi HJ, 2010; Kim ES, 2010b).

At the elementary school run by the village church, Han received the foundations of the modern education that Christians hoped would help to save the nation. In 1916, he was sent to Osan School, which had been founded by a Korean Protestant patriot Yi Seung-hun to train an educated and nationalist elite by a rigorous regime of character-building. The principal, Cho Man-sik, was an admirer of Mahatma Gandhi's method of non-violence and self-reliance to obtain independence. In his final year at Osan School in 1919, Han took part in the famous March 1st movement for independence from Japan, in which Christians—though small in number—played a leading part (for example, Lee TS, 2000). He was later arrested by Japanese military police and tortured in connection with a bomb attack at Pyongyang police station. Han imbibed the Protestant nationalist interpretation of the revival (Yi HJ, 2010: 171; Kim ES 2010b:547-50), which rejected the violence of the resistance armies and the materialism of Communism as methods to free the nation and focused instead on educational, cultural and spiritual capacity-building to prepare the country for eventual liberation (Yi HJ, 2010:177-78; Wells KM, 1990). One of Han's favorite texts was Zechariah 4:6: "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of Hosts", which he interpreted in this vein (e.g. Han KC, 2010[1966]).

Osan instilled in Han a desire to help to reclaim his nation and race from Japan by learning modern science and by becoming a better human being through faith in Jesus. He went on to the mission-run Soongsil College but there he observed the limitations of science to change human nature and came to believe that only the dissemination of the gospel would address the fundamental need of the nation—revitalization (Lee MY, 2010:43). Han retained a lifelong interest in science and what it revealed about God's creation but experienced a call to the ministry. With the help of missionaries and sponsored by one of the first Korean Protestants, Yun Chi-ho, Han studied at Princeton Theological Seminary immediately before the 1929 fundamentalist-liberal split. This experience encouraged the belief in a social gospel with an emphasis on love and altruistic service, which he had imbibed in Korea through the YMCA. He applied the teaching of Jesus directly to matters of everyday life and social issues. However, his sermons also show that he retained his evangelical conviction of the need for explicit response to Christ, that the last judgment would be on the basis of forgiveness of sins and not only works of love (Park CK, 2012).

During his stay in the USA, Han gained valuable fluency in English, formed strong friendships with Americans and learnt about international affairs. He understood that the religion, democracy and hard work of the Puritans and Presbyterians were the basis of the prosperity and philanthropy he saw there before the Great Depression (Son BH, 2010:155-

60; Kim SK, 2010) and he believed that Korea too would thrive with such a Christian foundation (Yi HJ, 2010:178-80). After graduating, Han hoped to pursue doctoral studies in the USA but his plans changed significantly after he was diagnosed with terminal tuberculosis. He decided that rather than pursue further studies he should dedicate what little time remained to service of Korea (Lee WS, 2010:title). On his return to Korea, Han shared this spiritual vision for the nation and sought to achieve it through building up the church through evangelism, education and service (Park MW, 2010). He rejected both fundamentalism and liberalism and instead sought a middle way as an "open conservative".[10] Han ministered to a growing congregation in the rapidly urbanizing northern industrial city of Sinuiju where he also distinguished himself by his religious opposition to Japanese assimilation policies (Han SH, 2010a:401-402), including Shinto shrine ceremonies.[11] For this he was jailed, and soon after his release, the Japanese government-general ordered him to resign because of his anti-Japanese, and presumed pro-American, sentiments.

In the dark days towards the end of the Pacific War, Han lay low at Borinwon, the orphanage set up by his church (see Lee YG, 2010:92-97). There he had a dream of a free and Christian Korea: "the entire Korean peninsula was stretched in front of me. I cannot describe how beautiful the country was… In each village, there was a chapel built in white stone and I heard bells ringing all around me". Han took this to mean that, although the forces of evil had taken over at the present time, they would soon be defeated and the vision would become a reality (Han KC, 2010[1981]:268).

The actualization of Han's spiritual vision for the nation

The emperor announced Japan's capitulation on August 15, 1945. Han was 42 years old and his spiritual vision for the nation was largely formed. It was now to be tested as he led his church and country through huge social change in a threatening environment. Actualizing his spiritual vision involved difficult choices which provoked both praise and criticism. It is not the purpose of this paper to defend Han but to reveal in more detail the context in which he was working and the limitations of the church growth and *minjung* discourses as mediated to the West.

In 1945, Han was asked by the provincial governor to maintain the peace between Koreans and Japanese before the expected arrival of the American army. He organized a committee of community and church leaders which was given control of the police. However, it was not the Americans but the Soviets who marched into the north. Han's opposition to Communism had been formed through debates in the YMCA in the 1920s and it was now

[10] For a discussion of Han's theology and his involvement in higher biblical criticism, see Lee MY, 2010:53-59.
[11] For a discussion of Han's complex attitude to Shinto rituals, see Lee MY, 2010:74-78.

confirmed by seeing their violence against the local population (Han SH, 2010a:400-401). They removed Han and his associates from power. Determined to oppose Communist control and knowing that elections had been promised by the United Nations, Han and others formed the Christian Social Democratic Party to rival the Communist Workers' Party. However the Communists soon moved to arrest the leaders and Han fled to the south of the peninsula (Lee MY, 2010:78-83.).

Arriving in Seoul in November 1945, Han was one among thousands of refugees from the north escaping the Soviet regime for religious, political and economic reasons. Southern Korea was in a chaotic state due to desperate shortages, high inflation and 2 million displaced people, and also because the population was divided in their attitude to the American occupation. As an elite male, educated in the USA, Han had many advantages and opportunities in the area controlled by the US military but he chose to build up the church and address social issues. He teamed up with former Princeton friends, and fellow northerners, Jae-jun Kim and Chang-geun Chang to support the only functioning Presbyterian seminary[12] and revive the church in the south (Byun CU, 2012:106). Han and other migrants from the Christianized, better educated and relatively industrialized north (see Shin 2011) achieved their aim but came to dominate the church in a way that was resented by others (Kang IC, 2004:157-90).

Han actualized his spiritual vision for the nation in four ways, which I have called: new church; new nation; new people; and new world.

New church: Youngnak Church

Encouraged by the three-self method of early Western missionaries, the Korean Presbyterian churches were self-help and mutually supportive communities and congregations from the north tended to regroup in the south. Soon there were twenty-seven refugees from Sinuiju for whom, in December 1945, Han founded Youngnak Church[13] in Seoul. By spring 1946, it had five hundred members and was in urgent need of a proper meeting place. Together with Kim and Chang, Han persuaded the US authorities to hand over to them about forty properties in Seoul that had belonged to a Japanese Buddhist sect (Tenrikyō), on which they established churches and institutions. Although the transaction was legal, Kim later expressed regret for acquiring land from other religionists by force (Lee MY, 2010:61-62) but, citing the need of his community, Han did not (Kim BH, 2010:412-417). In this way, Youngnak Church gained a prime site in the city. The congregation constructed, mostly by their own labor, a 2500-seat sanctuary in light stone, as Han had envisaged at Borinwon. To cope with demand, Youngnak began to hold more

[12] Chosun Theological Seminary.
[13] Originally Bethany Evangelistic Church.

than one service on a Sunday morning. In this and many other respects, it became the prototype of the Korean "mega-churches" that emerged a couple of decades later. It benefited from migration and urbanization (Lee KS, 2005) and it led the way in holistic urban ministry (Park JH, 2012:135-44).

Of Han's three dimensions of ministry—mission, education and service—in the difficult circumstances of the time, Han believed service had to come first. For Han, "the church is people" and a living body, often wounded and suffering (Han SH, 2010b:119; Rim G, 2010:270). He aimed to revive his congregation so that the body would be full of life in the Holy Spirit to be shared in love with the wider community (Han SH, 2010b:119-20; Kim UY, 2010:475, 479-80). He made Youngnak Church "a house of consolation" for refugees and separated families, and "a secret weeping room to plead the pain of a divided country" (quoted in Song SC, 2010:47). Church members who had businesses in the southern half of the peninsula supported the church and Han raised considerable funds from his contacts in the USA. He preached frequently on love as the chief responsibility of the Christian and on the need to be good stewards of gifts given (Sohn ES, 2012:124-34.). The deaconesses provided food and shelter for new arrivals. The church re-established Borinwon orphanage, started student hostels, a home for single mothers and a free funeral service. It mobilized the young people to preach and offer practical help in refugee camps, slums and rural areas.

As soon as basic needs were met, Youngnak Church founded schools, Sunday schools and night schools, including for women's education.[14] The congregation then set about the work of evangelizing Korea. Han's preaching was evangelistic and he also used mass media to broadcast his message to a wider public. He and his congregation conducted evangelistic and social work among the military, the homeless, workers and prisoners.[15] Youngnak Church founded daughter churches in Seoul and, after the congregations dispersed during the Korean War, in other parts of the country and the world as well.

New nation: South Korea

In the fraught post-liberation situation, Han prayed that his church would be not only "a center for evangelization of the Korean people" but at the same time "a stronghold of liberal democracy" and "a source of social renewal".[16] While the church was the means, the main aim of Han post-1945 was to found the new nation on a combination of Christianity, US-style civilization, and patriotism (Yi HJ, 2010:172-73). Han proclaimed that Christianity is liberating intellectually, culturally, socially and politically. It promotes women's equality,

[14] For Han's educational work, see: Park SK, 2010; Choi JK, 2010; Yoo JC, 2010:200-214.
[15] For the social work of Han, see Lee YG, 2010; Yoo JC, 2010; Lee KS, 2010; Park MW, 2010.
[16] Prayer for Youngnak Church inscribed in Han's personal Bible.

labor rights, democratic systems, cooperatives and welfare services (Han KC, 2010[1954]). He grounded this mission agenda in the biblical symbol of "blessed Canaan" (Yi HJ, 2010:181-87) and on the Kingdom of God, which in his sermons unfolded in national terms to realize a Korea that was "Christian, modernized, and democratic" (Yi HJ, 2010:176).

Although Han called for collaborators with the Japanese to be removed from public office (Han HS, 2010:401-402), he now saw the Communists as the real traitors who would simply transfer the country to Soviet control. Han's anti-Communism was not due to later Cold War doctrinarism (Lee SJ, 2010:220-22) but it was clearly thought out on the basis of his reading of Communist literature and showed remarkable insight for a Korean of his time (Lee MY, 2010:89). Han found that both Christianity and Communism are on the side of the proletariat rather than the bourgeoisie and share a similar dream of the common good but he believed that only Christianity could deliver this because human problems are not reducible only to economics but rooted in human sin and weakness. He did not believe that the proposed Communist society could be realized but that dictatorship would persist because, in rejecting religion, Communists had sidelined love, which was the only basis for successful community life, and they had bypassed ethical constraints on their means of obtaining and maintaining power (Han KC, 2010[1947a]; cf. Han KC, 2010[1947b]). Han stood for Korean independence against the Communists as much as the Japanese and for a new society of equality, freedom, democracy and philanthropy founded on Christianity (Yi HJ, 2010:176-77).

Han's bitter experience had confirmed his view that it was impossible for Christianity to co-exist with Communism in the new Korea (Kim BH, 2010:423). He backed Syngman Rhee, a Protestant nationalist and anti-Communist, for the leadership of Korea because he campaigned against the post-war trusteeship of Korea by the USSR and the Allies and for the creation of a separate nation of South Korea (Yi HJ, 2010:168-70). Whether this division was in the best interests of the people is a matter of ongoing debate (Lee MY, 2010:90).

Han blamed the Communists for causing the instability and the high levels of violence in the south (Han KC, 2010[1947a]). At Youngnak Church, he did his best to keep the large numbers of young people without proper employment out of street gangs by his service, education and construction projects. The youth were organized to protect the church and congregation and the interests of the refugees from the north-west, and they were mobilized for political campaigns (Kim BH, 2010:418-21). The Church also engaged the youth in evangelism, but this was aggressive and sometimes occasioned violence. Han himself led them to the Jiri Mountains, the main stronghold of Communism in the South, in a desperate attempt to convert soldiers to Christianity with the support of the local police and of the leading general, who was a church elder. Han later shrugged off the violence as insignificant in such troubled times (Kim BH, 2010:420-24).

When, in 1950, the North invaded what was now South Korea, Han blamed the Communists, although both sides had engaged in bellicose rhetoric. He condemned the conflict as fratricide but supported South Korea's survival and the war as a matter of justice, without which there could be no peace (Lee SJ, 2010:206, 224). Han flung himself into the resistance, utilizing both his Korean and his American networks to help the northern refugees and gathering broad Protestant coalitions to support the war effort (Kim BH, 2010:430-32; Han SH, 2010a:424-35). As UN forces were pushed back to Daegu and then to Busan, Han called for Christian youth to volunteer as soldiers and organized their training though most were lost in battle soon afterwards (for Han's reflections on this, Kim BH, 2010:432-34). Han chaired the United Christian Emergency Council on the War to coordinate relief activities, interfacing with the military and aid organizations. He toured military bases and refugee camps preaching the gospel not only to save souls but also to heal wounds. Most of all he aimed to arm people spiritually (Han SH, 2010a:433-34; Lee SJ, 2010:211-12). Han also became a church diplomat and negotiator. In 1951, the South Korean government even sent him to the UN to convey their thanks for international support (Ahn KS, 2010:379-81; Han HS, 2010:431). His activities during the war propelled Han to leadership of the Korean Protestant churches, to nationalist leadership, and to international recognition that further enhanced his standing at home (Lee SJ, 2010:226; Ahn KS, 2010:381-88).

After a decade, Rhee's government was known to be corrupt and he had achieved little economic development. Han was publically critical but did not support campaigns to remove him. After Rhee was toppled in 1960 and replaced by a democratically elected but unstable government, Han's fear that Communists in the north could take advantage of the South's weakness, convinced him—and a majority of the population—to support the military intervention led by General Chung-hee Park. When Park cracked down further on human and civil rights in the early 1970s, Han's stance was strongly challenged by the Youngnak youth but he forbad them to demonstrate lest the North Koreans, who were accused of various acts of infiltration, take further advantage (Kim BH, 2010:458-64). Han mobilized Christians to protest whenever the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea was suggested and he endorsed sending South Korean troops to the Vietnam War, as did all mainstream Christian leaders, whether conservative or progressive, up to the end of the 1970s (Ryu DY, 2004).

Han supported Park not only for security reasons; he was also persuaded that national security would allow for the economic development, cultural prosperity and church growth of which he dreamed (Kim BH, 2010:460). Han encouraged the church to support government programs for national development (Lee WS, 2010:177-81) that would "strengthen our national power… in politics, the economy, society and culture" (quoted in

Ha CY, 2010:504) and he saw the rapid industrialization and growing prosperity of South Korea as part of the Holy Spirit's work in history (Han KC, 2010[1970]; 2010[1971]). Furthermore, although Park was a Buddhist, Han supported his "spiritual" agenda to strengthen the nation by promoting morality along with modernization (Yi HJ, 2010:186). Han preached and prayed for the president and in return Park facilitated the activities of the churches as long as they did not criticize his regime.

Han maintained his preference for stability over civil rights even when General Doo-hwan Chun took power in another coup in 1980. Soon after he had been confirmed president, Han preached at a breakfast meeting at the Lotte Hotel with Chun and his officials. The sermon was a challenge to govern justly, but Han's apparent endorsement of the coup repeatedly aired on national TV and was heavily criticized (Yoo JC, 2010:230-37). In retrospect the incident appeared even worse because an uprising in the southern city of Gwangju that Chun had bloodily suppressed was not a Communist uprising, as Han probably supposed, but what is now known as the Gwangju Democratization Movement. Han's counterpart, the Catholic Cardinal Stephen Kim Sou-hwan was much more forthright in challenging the government on human rights. His interventions contributed to Chun's eventual overthrow by the democratization movement and left Han and other mainstream Protestant leaders on the wrong side of history.

Presbyterian policy was that church and state should be separated and Han expressed his belief that the church is a divine institution which should not be secularized or used for political ends (Song SC, 2010:46). However, on the grounds that an individual is simultaneously a believer and also a citizen, he encouraged church members to Christian patriotism, he challenged government officials privately (Han SH, 2010b:125-30), and he believed the church could be mobilized for matters that he viewed as social (Lee MY, 2010:99-100). Nevertheless, Han seemed to compromise the separation of church and state by, on the one hand, his ministry to political leaders and governments which appeared like a public endorsement of them (Lee MY, 2010:101) and, on other occasions, using his position to publically criticize governments and mobilize church members against them (for examples, see Yi HJ, 2010:184-87.). Perhaps the best way to make sense of Han's position is that he judged political action to be primarily social if it supported his agenda for national salvation (cf. Lee SJ, 2010:207-210).

New people: Unification by evangelization

The Korean War had made Han even more convinced that "Korea has no other hope than being born again through Christianity" (quoted in Lee SJ, 2010:203). In the context of the war, for Han evangelism had been primarily "a soul saving movement and a movement to encourage the spirits of people" (quoted in Han SH, 2010a:433). However, in the context of

peace in a democratic South Korea, increasing the numbers of Christians became the logical goal: "If the majority of Koreans in South Korea come to know and obey Christ, Korea will become a prosperous, democratic country where freedom and equality are enjoyed and human rights are respected" (Han KC, 1983:369). In other words, the main aim of Han's evangelism was not church growth, but salvation of the nation, on which the salvation of both the individual, and of the world, depended (Park MW, 2010:351-56.).

Han found effective ways of making Christianity "Korea's spiritual and mental foundation" (Han KC, 1983:369). His war-time experience of preaching to the troops convinced him that this was a strategic ministry, especially since South Korean men all do national service (Byun CU, 2010:111). He encouraged Syngman Rhee to install Christian evangelists in the military and in 1969 he established a national organization to evangelize the army, which had spectacular success in terms of conversions (Lee SJ, 2010:212; Kim BH, 2010:450-51; Lee KS, 2010:286-88; Lee YG, 2010:105-106). Han also encouraged industrial chaplains (Kim BH, 2010:447-48). From about 1955, Han began to direct his congregation toward personal evangelism, such as used by international student organizations, as an effective means of reaching people for Christ (Lee KS, 2010:265-278).

For Han, evangelization was a means of unifying the churches and the nation. The strains put on the church during the colonial period, as well as by the post-liberation challenges, produced a four-way split in the Presbyterian Church in the 1950s. Han's leadership of the Tonghap denomination showed that he was true to his middle way: he was open to the ecumenical movement but also conservative. Unusually, he was able to maintain good personal relations with leaders across the churches and parachurch movements.[17] Despite the splits, in 1965, the churches came together for the "30 Million to Christ" campaign, which aimed to reach the whole of South Korea. In the next two decades, Han organized or endorsed a series of such interdenominational mass evangelization events, which claimed attendance figures in the millions and made Protestant Christianity a popular movement (see Lee TS, 2010; Yi HJ, 2010:193-95). As well as being evangelistic, the events were nationalistic and anti-communist in their rhetoric, and prayer for the nation was an important feature. Both for these reasons and also because the mass rallies of Christians sent strong signals to North Korea and the West about religious freedom in South Korea, the military-backed governments not only permitted them but also leant support in various ways. Understandably, for *minjung* theologians, the rallies were collaboration with the very governments who persecuted them for their actions for labor rights and democratization, and they seemed to serve the narrow interests of the church rather than the people (for example, Suh DKS, 1983:15-37). *Minjung* theologians criticized mainstream evangelical

[17] Including with Kim Jae-jun, who became the leading progressive, and with Cho Yong-gi, pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church, even while the latter's theology was condemned by Han's denomination.

leaders like Han as quietist because they did not engage politically in the way they themselves did. But this is to miss the fact that the national evangelization agenda was also political (Ahn KS, 2010:72; Park CS, 2003:50-94) and also that the development of the country under the military, although repressive of civil and labor rights, was largely successful in bringing about basic economic and social rights (Kim K, 2015). Furthermore, the accusation that, while *minjung* theologians were in solidarity with the poor, mega-church pastors were profiting is difficult to level against Han, at least, who was famous for his "Puritanical" lifestyle (Son BH, 2010:155-65).

Han's aim of national salvation of course included his homeland in the North.[18] He regarded the de-militarized zone as chiefly a spiritual barrier (Han KC, 2010[1968]:363-64) and saw Youngnak Church as both an "altar of gratitude and prayer for those who received religious freedom" and "the upper room of the vow to restore altars in the North" (quoted in Song SC, 2010:47). Han believed that there was a faithful remnant of Christians underground there and he and his congregation prayed for an open door. In 1970, they initiated a prayer meeting for the unification of the peninsula and mapped out a plan to evangelize the North, even though they could not enter it or make contact with the people (Ha CY, 2010:501-507).[19] Han encouraged his congregation to educate people about North Korea and to prepare practically for unification with love for the North Korean people (in contrast to Communist hate) and with patience (Han KC, 2010[1972]). In 1990, as the economy in the North faltered, Han launched the Rice of Love campaign to supply food there (Ha CY, 2010:522-24; Yoo JC, 2010:237-42). This was the fulfilment of Han's vision that North Korea, like the brothers of Joseph, would come to the South for food (Ha CY, 2010:503), and it became the start of sustained Protestant aid and development work toward the North, which was funded mainly by conservative Christians.

New world: Extending Korea

Han's involvement with world mission began through his friendship with US evangelist Bob Pierce who came to Korea in 1949 as a revivalist and then, seeing the need, started the organization to help Korean orphans that eventually became World Vision. Han helped establish World Vision Korea, which extended his compassionate mission of service at home to the poor in the rest of the world (Lee YG, 2010:98-102; Yoo JC, 2010:189-95; Kim BH, 2010:452-58). World mission had been an aspiration of the Korean Presbyterian Church since its institution in 1907 because it was seen as a sign of a mature church. In 1912 the church began a mission to Shandong province in China that was sustained until

[18] This was indicated in the unofficial title of the 1973 Billy Graham Crusade: "50 Million to Christ" (see Lee TS 200*:94-95).
[19] Through broadcasting, dropping leaflets and Bibles, and building a cross overlooking the de-militarized zone.

Communists forced its closure in the early 1950s (see Choi YW, 2002). In 1955, despite Korea's impoverished state at the time, Youngnak Church enabled the denomination to commission another missionary to Thailand. However, the partnership model of mission then developing in the World Council of Churches was not in tune with Han's vision, which was inherited from the model of Korea's own evangelization (Ahn KS, 2010:402-419). In 1964, Han called for mission, in the sense of evangelism, in East Asia and saw the South Korean church as having a key role in this (Ahn KS, 2010:427-28; Yi HJ, 2010:178). In 1966, he shared this vision at the Berlin Congress (Han KC, 2010[1966])[20] and teamed up with US missiologists, who encouraged the notion that the torch of evangelization once handed from Europe to America was now being passed to Korea (Yi HJ, 2010:178; Ahn KS, 2010:422-31).

Gratitude for God's mercy and grace was a key foundation of Han's ministry (Kim ES, 2010b:544-47; Han KC, 2010[1981].) and his theology of mission was motivated by a desire to repay the debt of the gospel and to share the love of God in Christ.[21] His ministries of global service and world evangelization were both extensions of his ministry in Korea (Ahn KS, 2010:432-33), and but both also made the nationalist point that Korea had much to offer the world. As the Protestant churches celebrated their centenary in 1984, Han proclaimed that Korea should change from being a receiving to a sending country (Ahn, KS, 2010:69; Han KC, 2010[1983]:248). He encouraged the churches to express their gratitude to the Western missionaries who had served in Korea; in the circumstances this was also a (nice) way of asserting that Korea was now also a global mission player.

Kyung-chik Han's theology in changing discourses

Kyung-chik Han's ministry and theology has been incorporated into many other international mission discourses since the 1940s. His ministry was held up as an inspiring example in the USA by missionaries and Christian leaders from a wide range of churches, including the Presbyterian politician John Foster Dulles, the Methodist missionary E. Stanley Jones, Harold E. Fey, editor of the ecumenical magazine *The Christian Century*, Carl F. Henry, editor of the evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*, and Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, as well as by Billy Graham and Bob Pierce. However, many of these representations filtered their interpretations of Korean Christianity through the lens of their own agendas, choosing conflicting qualities to emphasize (Yoo W, forthcoming: chapter 5).

Not only was Han's example used to bolster international discourses, the powers behind those discourses also encouraged his ministry in certain directions that risked distorting

[20] Han took Zechariah 4:6 as his text.
[21] See Han KC, 2010[1983] and other sermons from around this date.

Han's own convictions. At the height of the Cold War, Han identified with the world evangelization movement and later he allowed himself to be included in the church growth discourse as an invited contributor to *Korean Church Growth Explosion*. However, although he shared that agenda, his goal was national salvation and reconstruction by education, service and wealth creation, as well as by evangelism. In his chapter in the book, he made a number of criticisms of the Korean churches' preoccupation with numerical growth and he insisted that "The church does not exist for its own benefit" but for service (Han KC, 1983:367).

Han was not included in the discourse of the *minjung* theologians, who generally did not refer to popular Christianity at all, except to criticize it. However, as we have seen, Han does not fit the *minjung* stereotype of mainline church leaders as politically quietist, nor was he motivated by personal profit or chiefly by anti-Communism and pro-Americanism. In fact, his theology emerged from the same pre-liberation Protestant nationalism as the *minjung* theologians themselves. He shared their sense of the power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian movement in Korean history and the narrative of messianic nationalism in the 1907 revival, the 1919 independence movement and resistance to the Japanese. Furthermore, Han and the *minjung* theologians had a common concern for the poor and for democracy. The chief difference was that, at a critical juncture in Korean history, Han decided, in view of the Communist threat, that the project of building a Christian nation was only possible within the security and stability provided by military-backed government. He stuck to this conviction even when it became unpopular.

Neither of the international discourses mentioned at the beginning of this article furnishes the broader historical background of Korea which is necessary to appreciate them fully. This study of the origins of Han's mission thinking, and of the ministry he exercised in the context of national insecurity, oppression, poverty, and struggle, reveals something of the challenges faced by Christians seeking to be faithful in Korea after 1945. Han's vision of new church, new nation, new people and new world does not fit squarely into either the church growth or the minjung discourse but represents a third, arguably more mainstream, strand of Korean mission theology.

Finally, stepping back from the Korean context, we can make three brief observations about mission discourses in general. First, the same geo-political and cultural context may generate a variety of mission discourses and those which reach international attention may be marginal ones that do not represent the mainstream. Second, what is constructed in one context can be reconstructed and manipulated to suit different mission agendas internationally. And, third, detailed study of the context from which it emerges is necessary to reveal the riches of any particular discourse and to draw out more fully its contribution to global theological conversation.

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